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MEMORANDUM FOR: [REDACTED]

Attached is a memo to the 40 Committee regarding NSAM 156. I understand that you have already received recently some related papers.

The DCI has seen this and copies have been sent to the DDI and Don Steininger. [REDACTED] has also seen this and is saving a copy for [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]
DDI/IRS, Reconnaissance Group

4 June 1971
(DATE)

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NRO and NASA
review(s) completed.

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(S) NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

June 4, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. PACKARD
MR. HELMS

SUBJECT: 40 Committee Agenda Items

NASA has recently discussed with us two items concerning photography from space. Both impinge upon the guidelines established by the NSAM 156 Committee and the NASA-DOD Survey Applications Coordinating Committee interpretation of these guidelines. Both have been submitted for 40 Committee consideration; the following comments are for your information.

The first item relates to the use of an Unclassified 18" focal length HYCON camera on board the SKYLAB scheduled for 1973 launch. The best resolution of this camera could approach 30 feet from SKYLAB even though the majority of photographs are expected to be in the 60-foot range. You will recall that we have used a guideline that 20 meters resolution for NASA photography of the earth is non-provocative, and that five meters from any altitude is acceptable for future earth sensing systems. It is our consideration that the SKYLAB experiment meets the future system criterion and that it is reasonable to permit NASA to proceed with this plan, recognizing that details of photographic operations must be addressed as mission plans are firmed.

At Tab A is a NASA letter soliciting 40 Committee views on the use of the HYCON camera for the SKYLAB mission. I understand that this subject has not yet been made a

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40 Committee agenda item, but that Dr. Kissinger is considering reconvening the NSAM 156 Committee to review the policies which should apply to future NASA photographic missions in space. You will recall that such a review was approved by the 40 Committee in April of 1970, during consideration of Apollo 13 Earth Orbital Contingency mission. The review was not conducted, however, and NASA missions then identified presented no problem in interpretation of the guidelines. An NSAM 156 Committee review now appears more appropriate.

The second item is the Apollo 15 contingency mission plan. This mission will carry an ITEK 24" focal length panoramic camera for lunar use. Should a decision be made to fly an earth orbital mission, the ITEK camera is capable of resolution of 25 to 35 feet from an altitude of 230 miles. This resolution does cause concern, for it is better than that permitted by the current guidelines for systems flown in the near-term time frame. You will recall that a similar earth orbit contingency plan was approved for the Apollo 13 mission, and subsequently for Apollo 14, although the best expected resolution was 30 feet, using an 18" focal length HYCON Lunar Terrain Camera.

It is believed that the contingency mission would be acceptable with constraints. The 40 Committee approval of the Apollo 13 and 14 contingency plans specifically excluded photography of the USSR and Communist China, and I recommend that the same reservations apply to the Apollo 15 contingency plan. I do not object, however, to NASA's more stringent proposal to limit photography to the Continental United States and contiguous areas. In addition, all earth-looking photography should be subject to an interagency security review in keeping with prior practice. The review group should consist of representatives from State, Defense, NASA, CIA and the NRO. This review would insure that no photography is released which would impact on U.S. policy or security interests. It is

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anticipated that this item will be included on the
Committee agenda in the near future (see Tab B). 



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2 Attachments

1. Ltr to Dr. Kissinger

dtd Apr 14, 1971

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2. Memo for Dr. Kissinger,

dtd May 20, 1971

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NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20540

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

April 14, 1971

Honorable Henry A. Kissinger
Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Dr. Kissinger:

In 1973, the US will launch its first experimental manned space station, the Skylab. One of its many experimental objectives will be to investigate the role of manned systems in the collection of earth resources survey data from space. To this end, we have developed our Earth Resources Experiment Package which will be flown as an integral part of the Skylab mission; this remote sensing facility is described in the attached "Announcement of Flight Opportunities" which has been issued to solicit proposals from the scientific and earth resources management communities for experimental use of the data we expect to acquire.

In addition to the family of photographic, infrared, and microwave sensors noted above, we have the opportunity to include a terrain camera developed for the Apollo lunar program that was flown successfully on Apollo 14.

This camera, an 18-inch focal length Mycon, would provide single frames of earth photography within the field of view of the multispectral and microwave instruments at a higher resolution than previously demonstrated by NASA. We would expect the earth terrain camera to provide some examples of earth photography with a ground resolution as high as 30-feet; we expect the average quality of imagery however, to be in the 60-foot class.

The principal reasons for carrying this already developed unclassified equipment in earth orbit will be to support the earth resources investigations of the Department of Interior in geology, cartography, and hydrology; to develop an understanding of the relative importance of

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spatial resolution versus spectral resolution in the earth resources disciplines; and to provide a sampling capability at higher resolutions within the field of view of the main sensors to assist in interpretation of their data. Current plans are to emphasize the US, the Western Hemisphere, and the contiguous oceans in the operation of the earth resources survey experiment; final decisions on the test sites and geographic areas to be covered will await our evaluation of the many experiment proposals being submitted for investigations based on Skylab, earth survey data and the final time-lining of the overall Skylab program. It should be noted here that, of the 8-month period during which Skylab will be active, less than half of that time will be manned; and, during the manned periods, we expect to devote a total of only some 70 hours to earth observations.

The proposed earth terrain camera is brought to your attention because its potential ground resolution capability exceeds the policy guidelines set out in 1966 by the NSAM 156 Committee that NASA earth photography should not be better than some 60 feet.

These guidelines appear to us to have been somewhat overtaken by time and events; there seems to be no technological security questions involved and the potential of international sensitivity toward space acquired imagery at resolutions significantly grosser than those required for intelligence purposes seems to have greatly lessened if not, in fact, to have disappeared.

We would like to have your 40 Committee's views on the question of including the earth terrain camera in the Skylab program; we have to date made no unclassified commitments to its incorporation in the mission, but would like, for schedule and management reasons, to do so within the next several weeks. We would therefore much appreciate an early response.

Sincerely,

George M. Low
Acting Administrator

Enclosure

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MAY 30 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: Honorable Henry A. Kissinger
Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs

SUBJECT: Apollo 15 Earth Orbital Contingency Mission

References: 1. Memo dated April 3, 1970, from Mr. Shepley to
Members of the 40 Committee, subject: Apollo 13
Earth Orbital Contingency Mission.

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2. Memorandum for the Record dated 10 April 1970 re
approval of above request [redacted]

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3. Memo dated Nov. 19, 1970, from Mr. Krueger to
Mr. Frank Chapin, Executive Secretary, 40 Com-
mittee, subject: Apollo 14 Earth Observation
Contingency Mission Plan [redacted]

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As we have done in the past, we are planning for an earth orbital
contingency mission in the unlikely event that Apollo 15, now scheduled
for launch to the moon on 26 July 1971, cannot continue to the moon
from earth orbit, but can safely stay in earth orbit and perform useful
experimentation. This contingency would offer a unique opportunity to
acquire earth survey photography in support of the NASA Earth Resources
Survey Program.

The attached memorandum describes the contingency mission as planned by
our Office of Manned Space Flight. The principal camera on Apollo 15
is the Echel 24-inch focal length panoramic camera. This camera has better
capability in terms of ground resolution and area coverage than the
equipment carried on Apollos 13 and 14. Because of a higher operating
altitude of some 230 n.mi., the actual ground resolution achieved would
be on the order of 25 to 35 feet.

We plan to optimize photographic coverage of the United States and
contiguous areas and plan to operate all the on-board photographic
systems in conformance with 40 Committee approvals for Apollos 13 and 14.

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In keeping with prior practice, we plan to have an interagency review of all contingency earth photography prior to its release and dissemination.

James C. Fletcher

James C. Fletcher
Administrator

Enclosure

Memo dtd May 7, 1971,
subj: Apollo 15
Contingency Mission
Planning (uncl.)

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